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P. Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Army announced today its investigators have discovered that a civilian psychiatric patient died after receiving drug injection in a 1953 test under Army contract.

It was the first death reported as a result of extensive Army-sponsored drug experiments dating back more than 20 years. These experiments involved about 4,000 soldiers and civilians. Pentagon spokesman Joseph Laitin called a news conference to announce discovery of a file revealing the death of a 42-year-old male civilian patient "in the course of a drug test program administered by the New York State Psychiatric Institute under an Army contract."

The Pentagon withheld the name of the victim, as well as other names in the case, saying this was done while it tried to locate surviving relatives and attempted to piece together more information in the case.

The only other death reported so far in the disclosures of drug experiments by government agencies was attributed to a Central Intelligence Agency operation 22 years ago. In that case, Dr. Frank Olson, plunged to his death from a hotel window shortly after he was given LSD without his knowledge.

Laitin said a representative of the Army inspector general discovered a file disclosing the second death while examining records last Thursday in a vault at the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. The inspector general is conducting an investigation of the Army's test programs with LSD and other drugs dating back to the 1950s.

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